DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 432 015 CS 216 786

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TITLE Relationship of Interactive Writing to Independent Writing in Kindergarten and First Grade.

PUB DATE 1999-04-22
NOTE 21p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Creative Teaching; Grade 1; *Instructional Effectiveness; Instructional Innovation; Kindergarten; Primary Education; *Reading Strategies; *Self Evaluation (Individuals); Writing Achievement; Writing Improvement; *Writing Instruction; Writing Research; *Writing Strategies
IDENTIFIERS *Interactive Writing

ABSTRACT

Researching what gains are made in independent writing as a result of interactive writing, a study examined the relationship of interactive writing to independent writing in kindergarten and first grade. Researchers collected samples of children's independent writing, interactive writing, student reflection sheets, individual conferencing, and observational survey results. Results indicated that in the beginning of the kindergarten study, many children could not write at all. At the end, all the children were writing random letters and beyond. At the beginning of first grade, all the children were either scribble writing or using random letters. At the end, all the children were using either inventive or conventional spelling. The students looked at their samples from August through March and wrote about or responded to the changes that they saw in their writing. The study recommends increasing time spent on interactive writing and encouraging all K-5 grades to use this teaching tool to improve students' writing. (Contains six references, four charts of data, samples of stages of writing, and a reflection on writing worksheet.) (SC)

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Relationship of Interactive Writing to Independent Writing in Kindergarten and First Grade

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April 22, 1999

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TARGET

Teachers As Researchers: Gaining Excellence Together

1998-99 ABSTRACT

Research Topic: Relationship of interactive writing to independent writing in kindergarten and first grade.

Question(s) Researched: What gains are made in independent writing as a result of interactive writing.

Method(s) Used to Research: We collected samples of children's independent writing, interactive writing, student reflection sheets, individual conferencing, and observational survey results.

Findings in Terms of Effect/s on Student Learning: In the beginning of the kindergarten study, many children could not write at all. At the end, all the children were writing random letters and beyond. At the beginning of first grade, all the children were either scribble writing or using random letters. At the end, all the children were using either inventive or conventional spelling.

Ways students were involved in the processes of Inquiry and Reflection: The whole study involved using student work samples. The students loked at their samples from August through March and wrote about or responded to the changes that they saw in their writing.

Ways to Apply Your Learnings: Expand our interactive writing time, share our results with other teachers and encourage them to use it. Find different ways to use the interactive writing to teach reading and writing strategies.

Team Members: Doris Bickel, Shirley Holsopple, Peggy Garcia, Mary Jane Lantz, Dee Yoder

School (s): Chamberlain

Date: 4/22/99

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Introduction

Literacy Collaborative is being implemented at Chamberlain, and interactive writing is an intergal component of the program. There is a definite relationship between writing and reading, and an improvement in writing leads to improvement in reading.

Reading Recovery has shown that the more time spent on writing in early lessons, the greater the progress in reading. "Interactive writing is an important part of the early literacy lesson framework because it provides so many opportunities to teach directly about language conventions, sense of story, types of writing, and concepts about print." 1

Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell, leaders in the Reading Recovery program assert that, "Interactive writing is a particularly powerful tool for helping children learn about letters, sounds, and words. They are not thinking that this is a lesson on letters or words; rather they encounter and use those elements in the service of real writing." 2

Observing the positive results of interactive writing in Reading Recovery and the fact that it is an integral component of Literacy Collaborative, we wanted to see if gains would be made in independent writing in the classroom by the use of interactive writing.

1 "Interactive Writing in a primary classroom" Kathryn Button, pgs. 446-454.

2 Word Matters. Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell. Chapter 15. pg.192.

Methods

Classrooms consist of students who know little or no English, special education students and English speaking students with a wide range of background experiences. Some come with rich literacy background and many with little reading, and writing experiences.

In an interactive writing lesson, a purpose for writing is established. Teacher and students compose a message or story which is then written on chart paper using a "shared pen" technique. The students write what they know and the teacher prompts and encourages the students. The teacher then fills in the other parts. As the students become more and more proficient, they take on more of the task. The writing is then mounted in the room for the students to read during center time. During the writing and reading of the stories, these specific skills are taught which will be used in independent writing:

* It demonstrates early strategies, concepts of print, and how words work
* It provides opportunities to hear sounds in words, and connect them with letters
* It increases spelling knowledge
* Children will understand the "building up" and "breaking down" processes in reading and writing
* It provides texts that children can read independently
* Written language is provided in the classroom

Data Collection Methods

1. Observational surveys given to all K-1 students in August and March.
2. Independent writing samples collected throughout the year.
3. Interactive writing collected throughout the year.
4. Teacher observation.
5. Student reflections.

Results

Observational survey (See graph)

In first grade we used the Writing Vocabulary and the Hearing Sounds in Words (HSIW) part of the tests and saw dramatic improvement in both scores. In the writing vocabulary all but one child at least tripled the number of words that they could write and all stanines were above average. In HSIW all students stanines were above average.

The scores for kindergarten in August were: 22 students got a score of zero, 17 had a score of 1-4. At the end of the year, 26 students had a score above 10.

Independent writing samples (see graph and rubric)

At the beginning of the year, in first grade, all the children, except one, were either scribble writing or using random letters.

They had little concept of spacing, punctuation, capitalization, or left to right movement. They had no concept of sentences either. At the end, 9 children were primarily using inventive spelling and were mostly using conventional spelling. Finally, they began using punctuation and capital letters in the appropriate places. They go left to right and leave spaces in their writing.

Independent writing samples in the beginning of kindergarten

The teacher had to add 2 levels below scribble writing to the rubric. The lowest was picture only, no writing and the second was picture and name only. All children except for one fit into those two lowest catagories. At the end of the study, none of the children were in the lowest two catagories. All of the students were writing recognizable letters and going left to right.

Interactive writing in First Grade

At the beginning of the year, the teacher was involved in almost every sound that was written. She did the majority of the writing and was responsible for sentence structure.The teacher helped to generate the purpose for writing. Now the children are generating ideas from the read-a-louds, science activities and shared readings. They have taken on most of the task of writing and proof reading.

They are using conventional spelling for many words, leaving spaces, using punctuation, and using correct sentence structure.

Interactive writing in kindergarten

At the beginning of the year, the teachers had to model writing before they could begin interactive writing. The next step was for the teacher to write everything except the beginning letters in a child's name. Now the children are writing many whole words independently. They can either write high frequency words from memory or can locate them in the room.

Teacher Observations in First Grade

The biggest thing we have observed is their transfer of skills from interactive writing to independent writing. The stories the students have written have become much longer. The students have become more independent writers.

Teacher Observations in Kindergarten

The children understand what the writing process is. They can say words slowly to themselves and use resources in the room. The children love to write and can joyfully write for 45 minutes.

Student Reflections in First Grade

The students were amazed at the changes in their writing. Some of the students did not believe their August samples belonged to them.

One student commented, "I didn't know I could write this good!" Other students said, "Now I can proof-read, I write longer sentences, now my sentences make sense." "I know my spelling words and I do my best." "I can read my sentences." "I don't scribble no more."

Student Reflections in Kindergarten

The children were surprised to see their early samples and are proud and excited about their work now. Some comments the kindergarteners made were: "We didn't use that much tape today (to correct errors)." " I can write the whole word by myself." "I know how to write "doing" because it is like the i-n-g in Irving. The children write for 30-40 minutes using the word wall, name chart, and each other as resources. They are able to read their writing to the class when finished. They know to think before they write, say a word slowly, and write what they hear.

Conclusion

All students made some gains in their writing and many made a dramatic improvement. We have seen the students become much more independent. In August they sat and waited for the teacher to help. Now they ask a neighbor, use resources in the room, or attempt things on their own. They are beginning to do some proofreading.

The students are now able to sit and write for 30-45 minutes. They are also beginning to expand their writing by reading to a partner and then are continuing on by using questions and suggestions from their partners. They have learned how to spell at least 45 words and some know many others. Writing has become something that the children look forward to.

Recommendations

We need to increase the time spent on interactive writing and to encourage all grades K-5 to use this teaching tool to improve the students writing.

Action Research Bibliography

Voices on Word Matters, Learning About Phonics and Spelling in the Literacy Classroom. Edited by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH. 1999 pages 25-36. "Interactive Writing: The How and Why of Teaching and Learning Letters, Sounds and Words". Barbara Joan Wiley.

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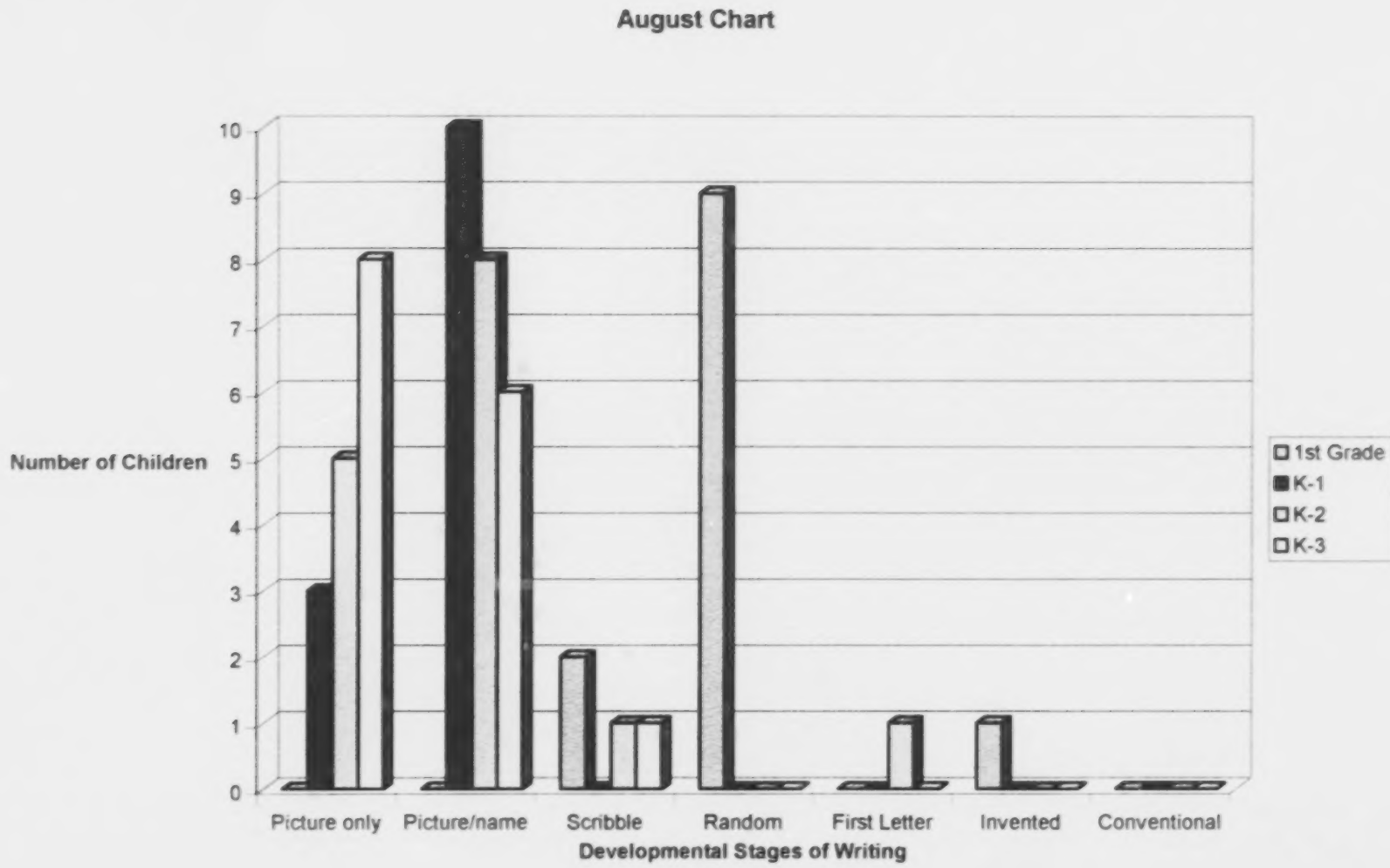
"Interactive Writing in a Primary Classroom". Kathryn Button, Margaret J. Johnson, Paige Furgerson. I.R.A. 1996. "The Reading Teacher". Vol. 49 No. 6 March 1996. pages 446-454. Gives the definition and examples of interactive writing. Addresses issues of integrating holistic literacy experiences verses teaching basic skills.

"Interactive Writing: A transition tool for Assisting Children in Learning to read and Write." Pinnell, G.S. , McCarrier, A. 1994. Getting Reading Right From the Start: Effective early literacy interventions. E. Hiebert and B. Taylor (Eds), Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon. Tells of teacher study groups in collaboration with O.S.U. This group developed the name "interactive writing" for their type of shared writing because they wanted to "emphasize the role of oral conversation" in addition to the writing task.



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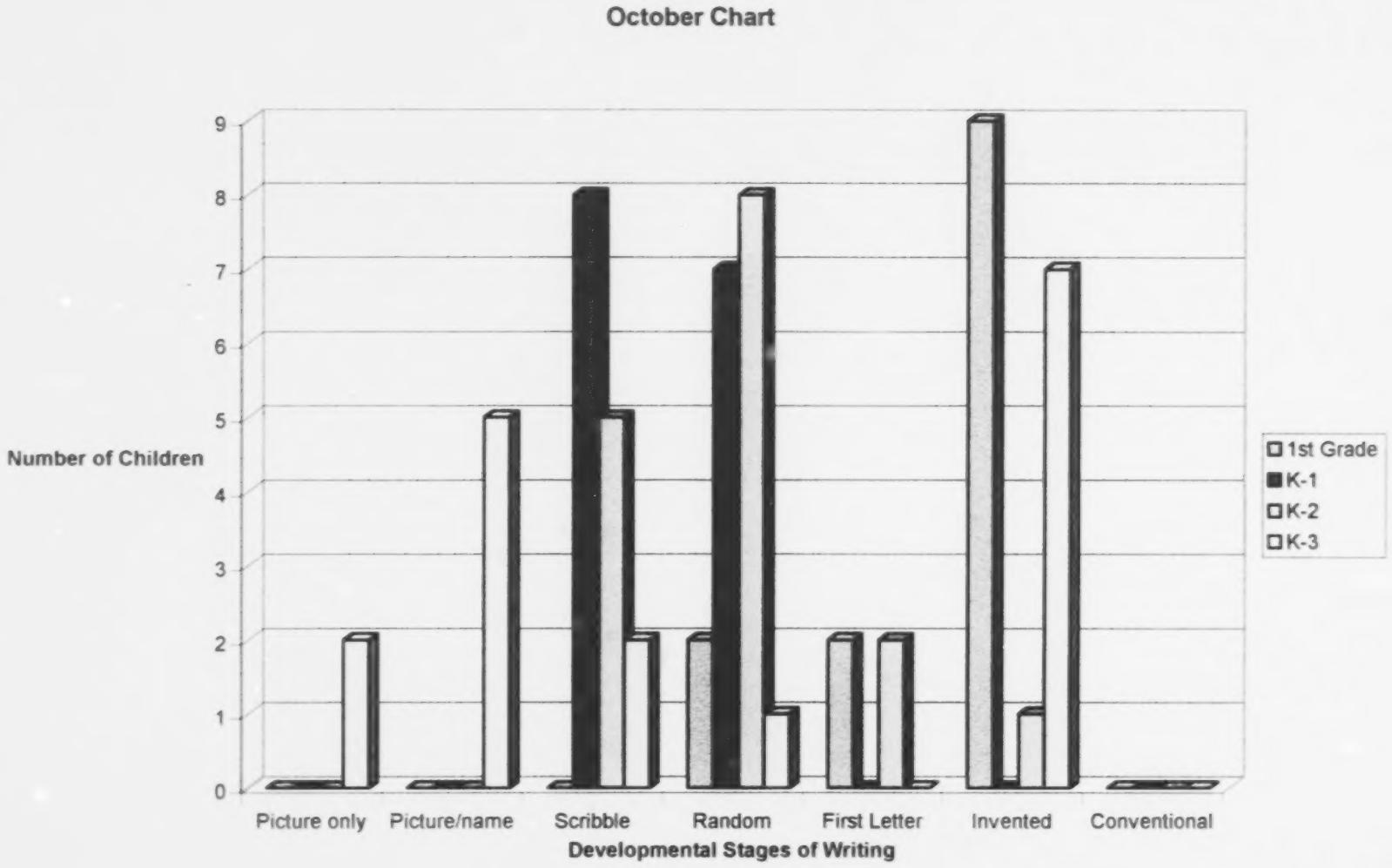

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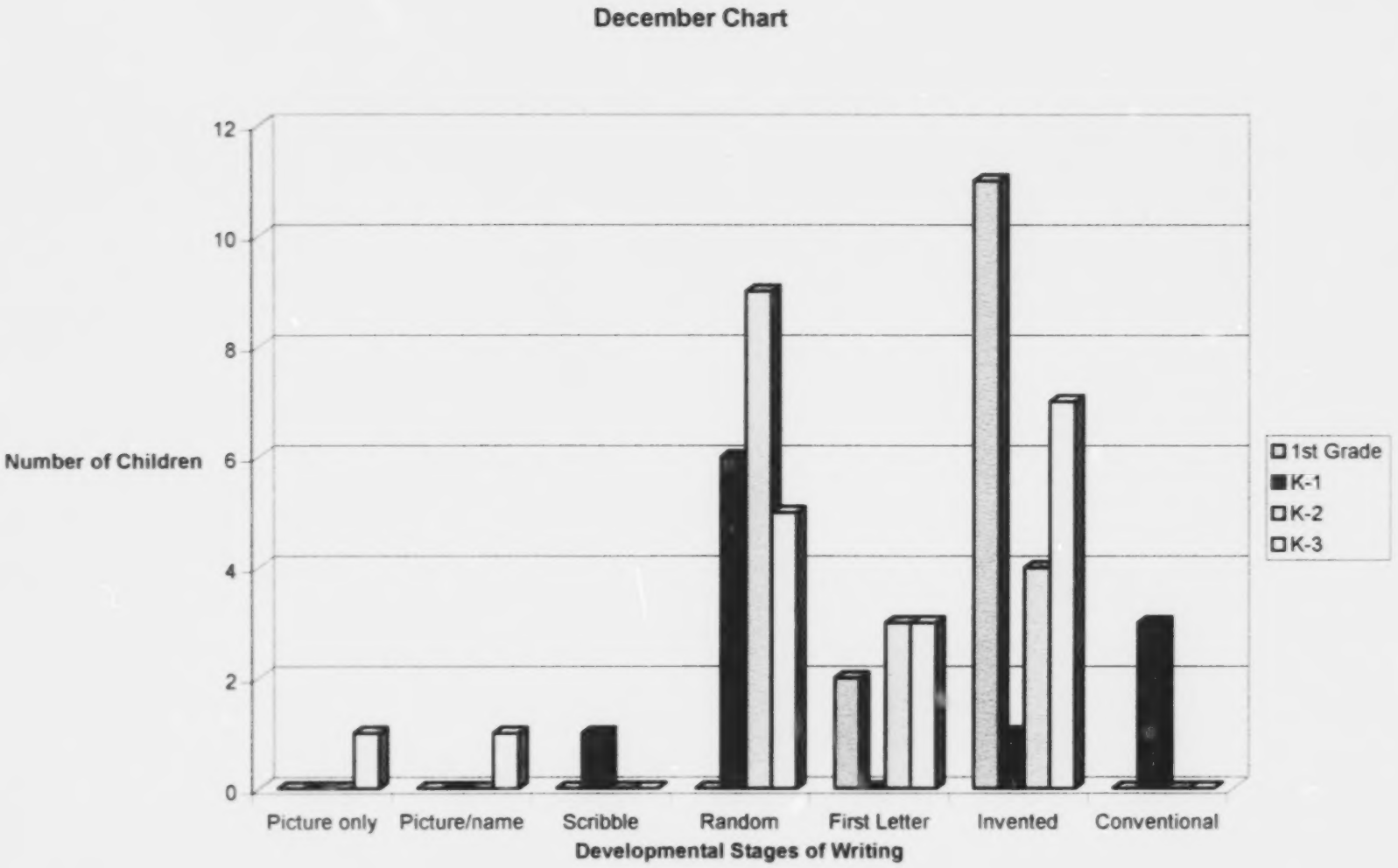

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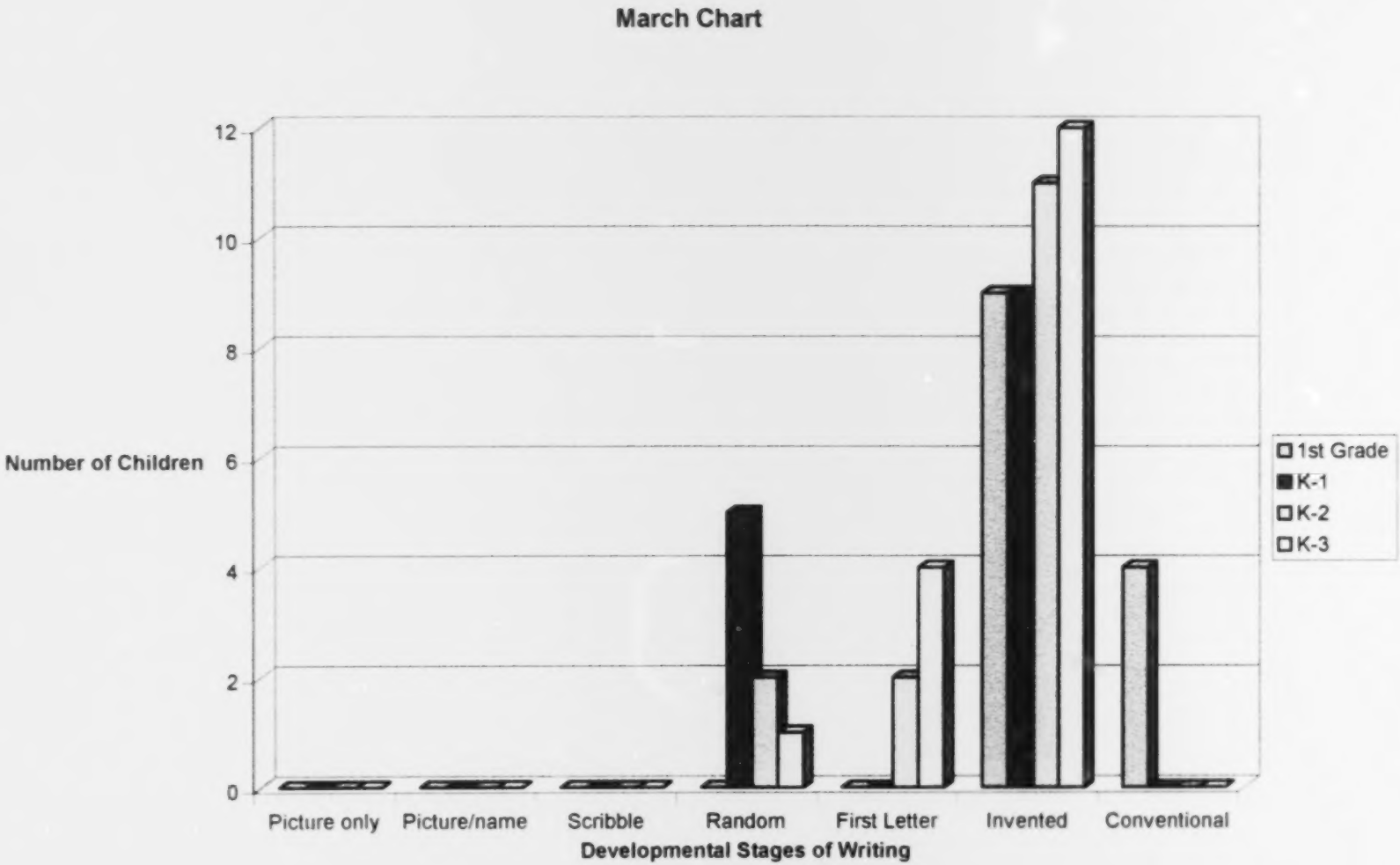

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Stages Of Writing

1. Scribble

2. Random Letters

B K R

S N T V X

3. First Letters

I C G T S

4. Invented Spelling

I cn go to sl.

5. Conventional Spelling
   Capital letters at
   beginning of a sentence
   Punctuation

I can go to school.

Reflection on writing

When I came to first grade I.....

Now I can.....